

BRIDGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
04/13/17

IN ATTENDANCE:

Bridge Advisory Committee (BAC) Members:

Jim Schatz (Facilitator), Mike Astbury, Deborah Brewster, John Chapman, Lynne Clark, Bill Cousins, Vaughn Leach, Stephen Rappaport, Lori Sitzabee, Karen Wyatt

Blue Hill Select Board: Ellen Best

Department of Transportation (MDOT): Andrew Lathe, Michael Wight

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): Cassie Chase, Cheryl Martin

HNTB: Kevin Brayley, Tim Cote

Public: Roxanne Jansen, Butler Smythe

Blue Hill Town Office Staff: Deb Boyd

Old Business – None

New Business

Topic Presentation – Committee Orientation

- Introductions
Attendees from the BAC, MDOT, FHWA, and HNTB introduced themselves.

- Gound Rules
Jim said to keep conversations friendly and respectful. When differences of opinion occur, a consensus or 75% of the majority vote will rule. Participation in the decision-making role is limited to BAC members. The role of the committee is to serve as a link between the Town's legislative body and the MDOT. Minutes will be posted online. Efforts will be made to link the Town's website to MDOT to enable interactive relations with the public.

- Binders
Binders were distributed with contact phone numbers and information regarding the Freedom of Access Act, Section 106, MDOT Policies on Streets and Local Cost-Sharing, and Bridge Terminology.

- Project History

The Blue Hill Falls Bridge, a/k/a Stevens Bridge, is a single-span, tied concrete-through-arch bridge (one of two remaining tied arches in the State of Maine) and, possibly, the oldest of its kind in the nation. Inspections are done every 2 years and rated on the following criteria: superstructure, deck and substructure. Detailed investigations include:

2009 Concrete cores taken for strength analysis

2010 Geotechnical Investigation (tidal water penetrating through northwest wing wall near high tide)

2011 Petrographic examination of concrete

2015 Phase I Archaeological Investigation

2016 Phase II Archaeological Investigation

In public meetings held 09/07/10, 08/05/15 and 11/06/15, MDOT received mixed responses on what to do with the bridge. The Bridge Advisory Committee was formed to “reboot the process.”

- BAC Intent

BAC members will identify all project constraints, community problems and needs at the site. By understanding the National Environmental Policy Act, they can analyze project constraints being considered during preliminary design (historic, archaeological, environmental, design & budget) and relay this information to the community outside of formal MDOT meetings. Members will vet reasonable options to the design team and assist in the creation of an alternative design matrix. The committee will support the public meeting process and continue the advisory process through the preliminary and final design of the bridge.

- Guidelines

Group interaction is necessary to discuss problems/needs and to create a Vision Statement, written for public use. MDOT will identify the need by identifying the existing transportation deficiencies and will identify the purpose by identifying the transportation facility performance upon the project's completion.

- Public Involvement

The public and media may attend BAC meetings. Agendas and Minutes will be posted on the Town's website: www.townofbluehillmaine.org

- Scheduled BAC Meetings – Town Hall Auditorium
 - 04/24/17 8am-10am Meet at Town Hall Auditorium / Site Visit
 - 05/08/17 6pm – 8pm Archaeological Significance
 - 05/22/17 6pm – 8pm Architectural Significance

- Future Topics
 - Site Visit with Context Evaluation Activity
 - Archaeological Significance
 - Architectural Significance
 - Environmental & Cultural Resources
 - Site Safety & Traffic Control
 - Existing Conditions
 - Finalize Problems, Need & Vision Statement
 - Bridge Rehabilitation
 - Bridge Replacement
 - Alternative Concepts & Constructability

- Maine's Freedom of Access Act

The public can request printed material originating from or provided to a State employee and its subcontractors (letters, meeting agendas & minutes, email correspondence). The public cannot request printed material between private individuals (emails between committee members). Additional information may be obtained at: www.maine.gov/foaa

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

This Act, signed into law 01/10/1970, requires Federal agencies to assess environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions (permit applications, adopting federal land management actions, or constructing highways and other publicly-owned facilities).

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

This Act was established in 1966 to “preserve the historical and cultural foundations of the nation as a living part of community life.” Federal agencies are required to consider the effects of projects they carry out, to approve or fund historic properties per Section 106 of the NHPA, and are required to provide an opportunity for commenting on such projects. Three properties NHPA eligible are:

 1. Falls Bridge,
 2. Arcady (a 2-story, 5-bay, 4-pile Renaissance Revival style house built in 1903, located to the southeast of the Falls Bridge), and
 3. Wakonda (a 2-story, 3-bay Queen Anne-style cottage built in 1904, located to the northwest of the Falls Bridge).

- Alternatives Analysis
Tim Cote explained the process of evaluating and comparing project alternatives against a series of evaluation criteria to determine the most practical solution. To begin, define project purpose & need, develop evaluation criteria, define and evaluate alternatives, develop an alternatives analysis report, construct preliminary and final designs, and finally, construct.
- Role of Design Consultant
The Design Consultant (HNTB) will evaluate the load capacity of the existing Falls Bridge, develop bridge and roadway concepts based on information from the BAC, complete conceptual engineering evaluations for identified alternatives to access feasibility, and assist MDOT with gathering bridge-related technical information.
- Project Alternatives Matrix
This tool will be updated after each BAC meeting and is used to evaluate alternatives against established evaluation criteria (roadway width, project life cycle cost, aesthetic value).
- The Village Bridge
Andrew says this bridge is NHPA eligible. Plans to replace the superstructure and top rail will be addressed in a future public meeting, possibly 6-8 months away.

Topic Discussion – None

Review Environmental, Design & Construction Impacts – None

Update Design Matrix

Public Comment

- Budget? – Tabled
- Deadline? – No. Load Rating needs to be done. Design process may happen 3-4 years from now.
- Policy on Eminent Domain? – Transportation uses only. State has right-of-way lines. Cannot condemn roads.

Adjourned at 7pm